

WORKSHOP REPORTS

Workshop 1: Implications and perspective of the APCET on Human Rights and Advocacy work in the Asia Pacific Region

1. HUMAN RIGHTS

1.1. Implications/Analysis:

- (a) More and more Asian governments/leaders using the "Western concept of HR" as an excuse for not respecting human rights; (usually to protect their economic interests)
- (b) Philippine government bullied due to economic reasons, and most countries are "blind" to East Timor due to economic interests
- (c) Most Asian laws today are handed down from colonizers especially National Security Law, used not for people but interest of the few in power
- (d) Many use and misuse HR concept for their interests
- (e) NGO information not reached grassroots (HRE)
- (f) Lack Asian HR System Asian HR Charter and
- (g) Others

1.2. Responses / Recommendations:

- (a) We must challenge this view and defend the universality and indivisibility of human rights
- (b) Lobby home governments re: their relation with Indonesia where possible lobby UN for stronger sanctions
- (c) Critical study on National Security Doctrines operating in the region to work towards its repeal in the region
- (d) Levelling off of our HR understanding
- (e) human rights education
- (f) Asian HR Charter and Tribunal Court
- (g) Regional Networking - share information, use existing networks to put ET on agenda

Train ET in monitoring and documenting HRV (by Asians)

Send fact-finding
missions

Support ET exiles return

1.2. Comments/Suggestions

While there are existing HR charters - European, African, it was noted that there is no such system in the ASEAN/Asia-Pacific region. There are a few HR groups in the region who have worked on these initiatives, and these groups should be maximized, especially to train exiled Timorese in the various aspects of HR work, i.e. documentation, education, etc.

Re points 1.1. and 1.4, there was a suggestion to substantiate the proposals with real, succinct arguments based on philosophical, anthropological and historical perspectives.

Gus Miclat raised the question of the Philippine groups not just accepting Timorese exiles for training, but also those Timorese seeking refuge.

2. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

2.1. Recommendation to concentrate in the following key areas of work:

(a) Political and Policy Advocacy

- Pressure the Indonesian government to open East Timor to NGOs
- Support the diplomatic initiatives of the CNRM
- Support the Nobel Peace Prize nomination of Bishop Belo

(b) Provide and channel humanitarian relief thru the churches (e.g. medicines, clothing, etc.)

(c) Capacity-building for the East Timor people

- Send Fact Finding Teams or study groups to East Timor
- Training exchanges and seminars
- Technology exchange and services

(d) Campaign/Action/Mobilization

- Generate resources: finances, logistics, and people among NGOs in Southeast Asia for the Maubere people
- Influence institutions in Indonesia and East Timor to work for the Maubere people

(e) Coordination and Linkages

- Tap the traditionally "non-political" network e.g. adopt a parish movement
- Strengthen solidarity among the various support groups
- Coordinate with East Timor Relief Association

2.2. Comments/Suggestions

Re: Proposal to support nomination of Bishop Belo for Nobel Peace Prize Award, there are only three groups recognized to nominate somebody for such award, namely: members of the parliament/government, members of supreme court/judges and previous Nobel Peace Prize winners. Likewise, publicity is not advisable for such.

3. CHURCH SOLIDARITY

3.1. Backgrounder

- (a) Awareness in church circles as outside much greater after November 91
- (b) Problem of dealing with Vatican
- (c) Continuing appeals by Bishop Belo for support and solidarity
- (d) Belo has appealed for visit, assistance (financial, personnel, training)
- (e) political solidarity

3.2. Task

- (a) Step up support of Bishop Belo and East Timorese Church
- (b) dialogue
- (c) verbal and written support from Church hierarchies world wide
- (d) from Protestant churches and progressive muslims
- (e) visit, delegations
- (f) financial and material assistance, training for youth

3.3. Comments/Suggestions

The historical experience of the Church in East Timor is such that it became impossible for the church to remain merely pastoral. Rather the East Timor experience has radicalized its priests and religious.

The Vatican, while it has not recognized Indonesian annexation, has neither released formal statements protesting the illegal occupation.

It was also explained that there is a need to rehabilitate the church buildings and infrastructure destroyed by Indonesian invasion and occupation. Financial assistance was called for. Equally needed is the adequate training of East Timorese priests.

4. WOMEN

- 4.1. In the workshop on the women situation and women's struggle in East Timor, the participants were two Moro women and four from women's organizations in the Philippines, another from a Filipino NGO, one from Switzerland, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia

They expressed the willingness to disseminate information about women in East Timor and take action in their support whenever possible.

We appreciate the efforts of the conference organizers but unfortunately there was a strong emphasis on the male leadership and the women's situation was not sufficiently addressed.

- (a) to copy and disseminate the material that is available here at the conference
- (b) to identify someone responsible to collect the material that will be sent to the APCET secretariat and send it out to all participants

Further we demand that in the future conferences (e.g., Sept 84 in Germany) East Timor speakers will be invited to speak on the situation and struggle of women in East Timor

4.2. Solidarity Message

APCET sends its solidarity message to the women of East Timor. We support their efforts for full participation of women in decision-making in society as well as in the struggle for self-determination as women and as East Timorese.

4.3. Recommendations

- (a) Participants willing to disseminate information about ET and take action whenever possible

(b) Demand that in the future conferences on East Timor that women be invited to speak on their experiences

(c) Send solidarity messages from APCET participants to the women in East Timor

4.4. Proposals for Resolutions

(a) Condemn population control program in East Timor -- part of genocide in East Timor

(i) condemn Indonesia

(ii) condemn World Bank and IMF

(b) Because of violence and sexual violence against women, request UN Representative on Torture not assume that women speak on behalf of East Timor but make specific effort to consult with the women of East Timor

4.5. Comments/Suggestions

There was a suggestion that preparatory work for the China Conference on women is needed immediately.

The point was raised that because of a cultural background compounded by a painful history, women of East Timor might not be willing to share their experiences. It was reported, however that there is actually no shortage of information about women's experiences in East Timor, and there is a need for them to be made available. Towards this end, this workshop group members have decided to take the initiative of putting together a compilation of materials on the subject matter.

It was added that re the training program for the East Timorese raised by the workshop on church, mere assurances that women's perspective will be taken up is not satisfactory.

5. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

5.1. Backgrounder/Sharing

Moro

Roughly six million of the total population of the Philippines are Moro. Moro is a political title for those not subjugated by the Spanish colonizers. Muslim is a term used for people who have embraced the Islam religion. The moro people have been fighting for their right to self-determination since time immemorial (thus the term "moro"). These days there are

different factions claiming to be the champion of the moro cause: the MNLF, MILF, Moro Revolutionary Organization, etc.

The APCET had a "hard" impact in Mindanao.

- (a) The businessmen pulled out of a supposedly Economic Boom meeting in Davao in protest
- (b) Ramos "dangles" the threat of Indonesia not allowing the GRP-MNLF peace talks in Jakarta if APCET continues
- (c) Points (a) and (b) mean that Mindanao might not be able to achieve economic growth and the Moro rebellion will still continue causing trouble for all

Why is the Ramos administration worried point (b)? The group's analysis is that Indonesia wants to succeed in this endeavour (peace mediator/facilitator) because it believes that once it succeeds, then it can neutralize other secessionist movements within its zone of interest.

The East Timorese experience of a genocide war experienced by the Mprp people during the height of the Civil Conflict in Mindanao under the Marcos dictatorship.

The Moro and East Timorese peoples go on with the struggle for the RSD.

Lumads

Lumad is a Mindanao generic term for Indigenous Peoples. Three are 13 ethno-linguistic tribes in Mindanao with the Subanens as the biggest followed by the Manobos then the Tirurays (then the rest...). They used to occupy the lowlands but have been either assimilated by the settlers coming from the north (Iuzon) and central (Visayas) Philippines; or driven higher up the mountains or the periphery of the urban and urban-like communities established. Basically they become victims of deceptive land laws (losing their ancestral domain/land in the process) and victims of those who want to exploit the natural resources (forests, mineral resources, etc.). They have now awakened to their plight and NGOs and institutions have been set up by them for themselves. One such institution is the Lumad Development Center, Inc. based in Cotabato

West Papua

Rich in natural resources, West Papua has a current population of 1.5 million. Also an assimilated province of Indonesia found at the Western part of the Island of New Guinea. They consider themselves Melanesian with totally different cultural ethnicity, geographical flora and fauna from the Indonesians. Yet they find themselves victims of "cultural" as well as physical oppression: the transmigration policy of Indonesia, Javanization, genocide, militarization and biological warfare.

They consider East Timor more lucky or in a better situation since support groups have been established and their issue more recognized by the HR desks, organizations and communities.

West Papua is struggling for the RSD. No NGOs exist in there and it is difficult for foreigners to get in. One has to get an internal passport to go from one village to the next.

APCET has not endeared itself to Indonesia because a recognized East Timorese struggle can/will/might open a big trunk of other "Indonesian provinces" struggling and fighting for RSD.

5.2. RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Support East Timorese struggle for self-determination, therefore, we recognize and support other peoples' rights to self-determination
- (b) other national liberation struggles
- (c) minorities and indigenous peoples common concern in ASPAC -- joint conference in near future
- (d) development policies not to suppress people's rights to self-determination
- (e) condemn all military operations on indigenous peoples

Recommendations re development/economic growth spring from a common fear that governments and economic giants seem to or are clearly viewed as trampling on people's/nation's right to self-determination: peoples lives and natural resources are weighed against dollars/pesos (economic gains).

6. PEOPLE'S DIPLOMACY, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

- 6.1. The APCET in its attempt at generating worldwide attention to the East Timor issue, does not owe its success to the Suharto-Ramos publicity. Rather, it is the firm resolve of the organizers and participants (local and foreign) to pursue the Asia Pacific solidarity conference for East Timor and to assert their right to freedom of expression and assembly that is primarily responsible for bringing to the fore the struggle of the East Timorese for freedom and self-determination.

6.2. Recommendations

- (a) raise the matter anew before the UN Decolonization Committee

- (b) ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting
- (c) Use other UN mechanisms/commissions to bring up the East Timor issue
- (d) IPJET Conference
- (e) Lobby before the Japanese Diet
- (f) Look into the independence of the East Timor Judiciary
- (g) IPJET book on East Timor
- (h) Lobby work in international bodies (inter-GOs, Gos, NGOs)
 - (i) UN Decolonization Committee
 - (ii) South Pacific Forum
 - (iii) APEC meet in December
 - (iv) NAM
 - (v) Vatican
 - (vi) Ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference for Asia
- (i) To request Mdme. Mitterand to take up the issue of East Timor with Pres. and Mrs. Ramos when they visit France in September and next month
- (j) To organize a pool of resource persons for educational campaigns in schools
- (k) Study seriously the viability and practicability of an alternative news bureau for the mainstream media
- (l) maximize already existing networks in Asia-Pacific and elsewhere for information exchange/dissemination
- (m) identify targets for information campaigns especially those groups with influence in decision-making
- (n) strategize on how to consolidate the gains of APCET for sustained and systematic information campaigns
- (o) formation of solidarity groups for East Timor at the national/international and regional (Asia Pacific) levels
- (p) hold regular solidarity activities for East Timor (anniversaries, commemoration) and to hold "protest receptions to visiting Indonesian officials
- (q) mobilize international support for the democratic movement in Indonesia
- (r) APCET courtesy call to Philippine Congress and Senate

6.2. Comments/Suggestions

Additional suggestions were put to the plenary. One, to get in touch with the following groups for purposes of networking: Cultural Survival based in Harvard; Survival International based in London, and; Katipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas. Two, to coordinate follow-up activities of APCET to coincide with the East Asia Business Conference in Davao, November this year. Preferably, the activity should take place in Davao also.

7. LEGAL ASPECTS IN EAST TIMOR

7.1. The following recommendations are those that can be implemented on the legal front of the East Timor campaign:

(a) **Raise the matter anew before the UN Decolonisation Committee**

Petitions sent to the Decolonisation Committee seeking for speedy resolution of the East Timor conflict are needed to pressure the committee to act more decisively. Such petitions could be sent through the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET) or the International Federation for East Timor (IFET), both of which have testified before this committee. The committee's next session on East Timor is scheduled on July 12, 1994.

(b) **Be involved in the upcoming ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting**

The meeting shall be held in Bangkok this 1994. With the help of Thai human rights NGOs, the issue of East Timor could be afforded ample publicity and included in the agenda of the meeting.

(c) **Utilize other UN mechanisms/commissions**

Apart from the UN Decolonisation Committee, other commissions that could be lobbied upon with regard to East Timor, includes the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, UNICEF and others.

(d) **Take part in the IPJET Conference**

IPJET is an international organization of jurists and nonjurists whose secretariat is based in Leiden, the Netherlands. IPJET has an upcoming conference in Isserholn, Germany scheduled on September 30 to October 2, 1994. IPJET is also conducting a contest for the best thesis on East Timor, offering a prize of US\$1,000.

(e) **Lobby before the Japanese Diet**

A number of Japanese parliamentarians are sympathetic to the plight of the East Timorese and are critical of Indonesia's human rights record. They could yield influence, specially on the matter of Japanese ODA, of which Indonesia is a major recipient.

(f) Look into the independence of the East Timorese judiciary

Human rights violations in East Timor could be lessened if there is a strong and independent judiciary. Its performance could be assessed by independent monitoring bodies.

(g) IPJET book on East Timor

A book on East Timor written by twenty members of IPJET is due to be released on January 1995.

The above recommendations were given with the understanding that any such recommendation is irrelevant if the people of East Timor are not directly involved. They should at least be informed that such initiatives are taking place.

7.2. Suggestions/Comments

(a) IPJET has tried to raise the East Timorese issue in the UN Decolonization Committee

(b) APCET members can attend the IPJET conference in September 1994 in Germany